

AN INDICTMENT OF INTERCOLLEGIATE  
ATHLETICS

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## I

INTERCOLLEGIATE athletics provide a costly, injurious, and excessive régime of physical training for a few students, especially those who need it least, instead of inexpensive, healthful, and moderate exercise for all students, especially those who need it most.

Athletics are conducted either for education or for business. The old distinction between amateur and professional athletics is of little use. The real problems of college athletics loom large beside the considerations that define our use of the terms 'professional' and 'amateur.' The aims of athletics reveal the fact that the important distinctions are between athletics conducted for educational purposes and athletics conducted for business purposes.

When athletics are conducted for education the aims are (1) to develop all the students and faculty physically and to maintain health; (2) to promote moderate recreation, in the spirit of joy, as a preparation for study rather than as a substitute for study; and (3) to form habits and inculcate ideals of right living. When athletics are conducted for business, the aims are (1) to win games — to defeat another person or group being the chief end; (2) to

make money — as it is impossible otherwise to carry on athletics as business; (3) to attain individual or group fame and notoriety. These three — which are the controlling aims of intercollegiate athletics — are also the aims of horse-racing, prize-fighting, and professional baseball.

These two sets of aims are in sharp and almost complete conflict. Roughly speaking, success in attaining the aims of athletics as education is inversely proportional to success in attaining the aims of athletics as business. Intercollegiate athletics to-day are for business. The question is pertinent whether schools and colleges should promote athletics as business.

Nearly all that may be said on this subject about colleges applies to secondary schools. The lower schools as a rule tend to imitate the worst features of intercollegiate athletics, much as the young people of fraternities, in their 'social functions,' tend to imitate the empty lives of their elders that fill the weary society columns of the newspapers.

If the objection arises that intercollegiate athletics have educational value, there is no one to deny it. 'Athletics for education' and 'athletics for business' are general terms, used throughout this discussion as already

defined. Exceptions there may be; only the main tendencies are here set forth. The whole discussion is based on my personal observations at no less than one hundred universities and colleges in thirty-eight states during the past five years.

The most obvious fact is that our system of intercollegiate athletics, after unbounded opportunity to show what it can do for the health, recreation, and character of *all* our students, has proved a failure. The ideal of the coach is excessive training of the few: he best attains the business ends for which he is hired by the neglect of those students in greatest need of physical training. Our present system encourages most students to take their athletics by proxy. When we quote with approval the remark of the Duke of Wellington that Waterloo was won on the playing grounds of Eton, we should observe that he did not maintain that Waterloo was won on the grandstands of Eton.

What athletics may achieve without the hindrance of intercollegiate games and business motives is suggested by the experience of Reed College. There the policy of athletics for everybody was adopted five years ago before there were any teachers, students, alumni, or traditions. Last year all but six of the students took part in athletics in the spirit of sport for the sake of health, recreation, and development. Sixty per cent of the men of the college, including the faculty, took part in a schedule of sixteen baseball games. Nearly all the students, men and women alike, played games at least twice a week. There were series of contests in football, baseball, track, tennis, volleyball, basket-ball, and other out-of-door sports. All of this, according to the report of the athletic association, cost the students an average of sixteen cents apiece. No money for coaches

and trainers; no money for badges, banners, cups, and other trinkets; no money for training-tables and railroad fares; no money for grandstands, rallies, brass bands, and advertising. Fortunately, it is the unnecessary expenses that heap up the burdens — the cost of athletics as business. The economical policy is athletics for everybody — athletics for education.

## II

Opposed to the three educational aims are the aims of athletics as business — winning games, making money, and getting advertised.

Almost invariably the arguments of students in favor of intercollegiate games stress the business aims and ignore all others. Win games! Increase the gate-receipts! Advertise the college! These are the usual slogans. Thus the editors of one college paper reprimand the faculty for even hesitating to approve a trip of fifteen hundred miles for a single game of football: —

‘Contrary to the expectations of the students, the matter of the Occidental football game for next fall has not been acted upon as yet. That such an important matter as this has not received attention so far from the Faculty is unfortunate. While it is generally believed that the Faculty will act favorably in regard to letting the game be scheduled, it is understood that some opposition has developed on the ground that such a long trip would keep the football men away from their classes too long a time.

‘From every point of view, there seems no reason why the game should not be played. To state any of the arguments in favor of the offer is unnecessary. Every one knows what it would mean to football next fall, the greater interest it would mean to the game, the incentive it would prove to every foot-

ball man to work to become one of the seventeen men to take the trip, the advertising it would give to the college, and, perhaps most important, the drawing card it would be to bring new athletes to the college in the fall. These points and others are too well known to need pointing out and too evident to need proof.'

This is a typical football argument. It attempts to prove the necessity of the proposed trip by showing that it would tend to perpetuate the thing the value of which is under dispute.

In like vein the students of Cornell complain because the faculty did not grant an additional holiday in connection with the Pennsylvania football game. It is the familiar cry, 'Support the team! Win games! Advertise the college!'

'Our friends, the professors, will perforce hold forth in their accustomed cells from eight till one of that fair morning. The benches, no doubt, will derive great benefit therefrom. . . .

'We want the football team to have as much support as possible. The faculty should want the football team to have as much support as possible. The faculty should foster true Cornell spirit whenever it can honestly do so, and intercollegiate athletics is the greatest single thing that unites the different colleges into Cornell University. A victory over Penn would mean a lot for Cornell.'

After all, how important is this end for which such sacrifices are made? To hear the yelling of twenty thousand spectators, one might suppose this aim to be the only one of great importance in the life of the university. Yet who wins, who loses, is a matter of but momentary concern to any except a score or two of participants; whereas, if there is one thing that should characterize a university, it is its cheerful sacrifice of temporary for permanent gains, — in

Dr. Eliot's fine phrase, its devotion to the durable satisfactions of life.

The making of money, through intercollegiate athletics, continues a curse, not only to institutions, but as well to individual players. Only childlike innocence or willful blindness need prevent American colleges from seeing that the rules which aim to maintain athletics on what is called an 'amateur' basis, by forbidding players to receive pay in money, are worse than useless because, while failing to prevent men from playing for pay, they breed deceit and hypocrisy. There are many ways of paying players for their services. Only one of these, and that the most honorable, is condemned.

There are many subterranean passages leading to every preparatory school notable for its athletes. By such routes, coaches, over-zealous alumni, and other 'friends' of a college, reach the schoolboy athlete with offers beyond the scope of eligibility rules. Sometimes payments are made expressly for services as half-back, or short-stop, or hurdler, and no receipts taken, the pay continuing as long as the player helps to win games. Sometimes payments take a more insidious and more demoralizing form. The star athlete is appointed steward of a college clubhouse on ample pay, his duties being to sign checks once a month. Or his college expenses are paid in return for the labor of opening the chapel door, or ringing the bell, or turning out the lights.

Athletes may be paid for their services in other ways that escape the notice of the most conscientious faculties and athletic associations. But there are hundreds of boys who know that they are paid to win games and keep silent; they are hired both as athletes and as hypocrites.

The sporting editor of one of the leading daily papers said recently, 'It is

well known that the Northwest colleges are at present simply outbidding one another in their desire to get the best athletes. Money is used like water. It is a mystery where they get it, but they do.'

So common is the practice of paying athletes that they sometimes apply to various colleges for bids. While I was acting as Registrar of Bowdoin College, I received a letter from a man asking how much we would guarantee to pay him for pitching on the college nine. I found out later that he had registered at one college, pitched a game for his class team, left his trunk at a second college awaiting their terms, and finally accepted the offer of a third college, where he played 'amateur' baseball for four years before joining one of the big league professional teams.

At the athletic rallies of a New England college, a loyal alumnus is often cheered for bringing so many star athletes to the college. Officially, the college does not know that he hires men to play on the college teams. And what is to prevent a graduate of the college or any other person from hiring athletes? All but futile are the rules governing professionalism. Is it not a worthy act to enable a boy to go to college? And shall he be denied such aid because he happens to be an athlete? No eligibility committee knows of all these benefactors or even has the right to question their motives. But the objectionable motives themselves can be eliminated by one act — the abolition of intercollegiate athletics. With the subordination of winning games as the chief end in athletics, falls also the money-making aim and its attendant evils.

All the serious evils of college athletics centre about the gate-receipts, the grandstand, and the paid coach. Yet the aim of nearly every college appears to be to fasten these evils upon the in-

stitution by means of a costly concrete stadium or bowl, and by means of more and more money for coaches. When the alumni come forward to 'support their team,' they usually make matters worse. Typical of their attitude is a letter signed in Philadelphia last fall by some thirty graduates of a small college: —

'The team has just closed the most disastrous season in its history. . . . The alumni will coöperate cheerfully with the undergraduates in increasing the football levy. It only remains, then, to initiate a campaign for procuring the money. . . . We must depart from our time-worn precedents and give *more money for the coaches!* Alumni are tired of reading the accounts of useless defeats!'

The extent to which interest in athletics is deadened by paid coaches was shown last spring, when a track team from one university, after traveling over two hundred and fifty miles — at the expense of the student body — to compete with the team of another institution, took off their running shoes and went home because the *coaches* could not agree on the number of men who should participate in the games. Could there be a more abject sacrifice of the educational purposes of athletics? Consider the spectacle. A glorious afternoon in spring, a perfect playground, complete equipment in readiness, two score of eager youth in need of the health and recreation that come from sport pursued in the fine spirit of sport. Could anything keep them from playing? Nothing but the spirit of modern American intercollegiate athletics and the embodiment of that spirit, the paid coach, who knows that there is but one crime that he can commit — that of losing a contest.

The athletic policy of many an institution is determined by a commercial aim, the supposed needs of advertising,

much as the utterances of many a newspaper are dictated by the business manager. But does the advertising gained through intercollegiate athletics injure or aid a college? At one railroad station I was greeted by a real-estate agent who offered to sell me 'on easy terms a lot in the most beautiful and rapidly growing city in America.' (Thus do I safely cover its identity.) Among the attractions, he mentioned the local college. He was proud of it; he said it had the best baseball team in the state. Apart from that he had not an intelligent idea about the institution, or any desire for ideas. The only building he had visited was the grandstand. He could not name a member of the faculty or a course of instruction. College advertising which gets no further than this is paid for at exorbitant rates.

The people of Tacoma discovered recently that college athletics conducted as a business are too costly. They brought college students 1400 miles to play a football game at Tacoma on Thanksgiving Day for the benefit of the Belgian refugees. The charitable object of the game was widely advertised and there was a large attendance. After they had paid the expenses of the 'amateur' teams, the coaches, and the advertising, they announced that there was nothing left for the Belgians.

A writer in the *North American Review* tries to justify the time spent by college boys in managing athletic teams on the plea that it is good training for business. He gives testimony to this effect from a graduate of two years' standing 'engaged in the wholesale coal business in one of the large New York towns.' Following the usual custom, this young graduate returns to his college and gives the admiring undergraduates the benefit of his wisdom, lest they be corrupted by the quaint notions of impractical professors. He has them guess

what part of his college work has proved of greatest use; then he assures them that his best training came as manager of the baseball team. Such is the mature judgment of the coal-dealer. And such is the advice of alumni that makes undergraduates resolve anew not to allow their studies to interfere with their college education. But some people raise the question why a boy should be maintained in college for four years, at a great cost to society and to his parents, in order that he may gain a little business experience when he could gain so much more by earning his living.

The conflicts frequently arising between faculties and students over questions of intercollegiate athletics are the natural outcome of the independent control of a powerful agency with three chief aims — winning games, making money, and getting advertised — which are antagonistic to the chief legitimate ambitions of a university faculty. No self-respecting head of a department of psychology would tolerate the presence in the university of persons working in his field, in no way subject to him and with aims subversive of those of the department. No professor of physical education should tolerate a similar condition in his department. It is one of the hopeful signs in America that several of the men best qualified to conduct athletics as education have declined to consider university positions, unless they could have control of students, teams, coaches, alumni committees, grandstands, fields, finances, and everything else necessary to rescue athletics from the clutches of commercialism.

I have read a letter from one of the ablest teachers in America, declining to accept a certain university position under the usual conditions, but outlining a plan whereby, as the real head of the department of physical education,

he might begin a new chapter in the history of American athletics. His plan was rejected, not because it had any defects as a system of education, but solely because it would cause a probable decline in victories, gate-receipts, and newspaper space. That university continued the traditional dual contest of coaches and physical directors with their conflicting ideals. Recently I received a letter from the professor of physical education who *did* accept the position, himself one of the ablest athletes among its graduates, declaring that he would no longer attempt the impossible, in an institution that deliberately prostituted athletics for commercial ends.

We hear much about the value of intercollegiate games for the 'tired business man' who needs to get out of doors and watch a sport that will make him forget his troubles. It is true that for him a game of baseball may be a therapeutic spectacle. The question is whether institutions of learning should conduct their athletics — or any other department — for the benefit of spectators. Doubtless university courses in history could provide recreation for the general public and make money, if instruction were given wholly by means of motion-pictures. But such courses would hardly satisfy the needs of all students. Is it less important that departments of physical education should be conducted primarily for all students rather than for spectators? We do not insist that banks, railroads, factories, department stores, and legislatures jeopardize their main functions in order to provide recreation for the tired business man. Universities are institutions of equal importance to society, in so far as they attend to their main purposes. Athletics for the benefit of the grandstand must be conducted as business; athletics for the benefit of students must be conducted as education.

### III

It is when we rightly estimate the possibilities of athletics as education that the present tyranny of athletics as business becomes intolerable. Is it not an anomaly that those in charge of higher institutions of learning should leave athletic activities, which are of such great potential educational value for *all* students, chiefly under the control of students, alumni, coaches, newspapers, and spectators? Usually the coach is engaged by the students, paid for by the students, and responsible only to them. He is not a member of the faculty or responsible to the faculty. The faculty have charge of the college as an educational institution; athletics is for business and therefore separately controlled. Why not abandon faculty direction of Latin? Students, alumni, and newspapers are as well qualified to elect a professor of Latin and administer the department in the interests of education, as they are to elect coaches and administer athletics in the interests of education.

A few of the more notable coaches of the country are aware of the possibilities of athletics controlled by the faculty for educational purposes. Mr. Courtney, the Cornell coach, spoke to the point when he said, —

'If athletics are not a good thing, they ought to be abolished. If they are a good thing for the boys, it would seem to me wise for the university to take over and control absolutely every branch of sport; do away with this boy management; stop this foolish squandering of money, and see that the athletics of the University are run in a rational way.'

Next to the physical development and the maintenance of the health of all the students and teachers of an institution, the main purpose of athletics as education is to provide recrea-

tion as a preparation for study rather than as a substitute for study. But, intercollegiate athletics having won and retained unquestioned supremacy in our colleges, students do not tolerate the idea of a conflicting interest.

Even the nights preceding the great contests must be free from the interference of intellectual concerns. An editorial in one of our college weeklies makes this point clear. If a member of the faculty ventured to put the matter so extremely, he would be charged with exaggeration. But in this paper the students naïvely present their conviction that even the most signal opportunities for enjoying literature must be sacrificed by the entire student body in order that they may get together and yell in preparation for their function of sitting in the grandstand. In this case the conflicting interest appeared in no less a person than Alfred Noyes. For a geographically isolated community to hear the poet was an opportunity of a college lifetime. Yet the students wrote as follows:—

‘THE RALLY *vs.* NOYES.

‘Returning alumni this year were somewhat surprised to find the Hall used for a lecture on the eve of our great gridiron struggle, and some were very much disappointed. The student body was only partially reconciled to the situation and was represented in great part by Freshmen [who were required to attend].’

The relative importance of intercollegiate athletics and other college affairs, in the minds of students, is indicated by student publications. There is no more tangible scale for measuring the interests of college youth than the papers they edit for their own satisfaction, unrestrained by the faculty.

Let us take two of the worthiest colleges as examples. The Bowdoin Col-

lege *Orient*, a weekly publication, is typical. For the first nine weeks of the academic year 1914–15, the *Orient* gave 450 inches to intercollegiate athletics. For the same period, it devoted six inches to art, ten inches to social service, thirteen inches to music, and twelve inches to debating. Judging from this free expression, the students rate the interests of intercollegiate athletics nearly three times as high as the combined interests of art, music, religion, philosophy, social service, literature, debating, the curriculum and the faculty. Second in importance to intercollegiate athletics, valued at 450 inches, are dances and fraternities, valued at 78 inches.

Another possible measure of the student's interest is found in *Harvard of Today from an Undergraduate Point of View*, published in 1913 by the Harvard Federation of Territorial Clubs. The book gives to athletics ten pages; to the clubs, six pages; to debating, five lines,—and that student activity requires sustained thinking and is most closely correlated with the curriculum. The faculty escapes without mention. ‘From an undergraduate point of view’ the faculty appears to be an incumbrance upon the joys of college life.

These publications appear to be fair representatives of their class. It is probable, furthermore, that the relative attention given by the student papers to intellectual interests is a criterion of the conversation of students.

Not long ago, I spent some time with the graduate students at an Eastern university. Their conversation at dinner gave no evidence of common intellectual interests. They appeared to talk of little but football games.

On a visit to a Southern state university, I found the women's dormitory in confusion. The matron excused the noise and disorder on the ground



that a big football game was pending and it seemed impossible for the girls to think of anything else.

'The big game comes to-morrow?' I asked.

'Oh, no, next week,' she said.

Last spring, at a large university on the Pacific Coast, I met one young woman of the freshman class who had already been to thirty-one dances that year. At a state university of the Middle West, I found that the students had decided to have their big football game on Friday instead of Saturday, in order to wrench one more day from the loose grip of the curriculum. When the faculty protested, the students painted on the walks, 'Friday is a holiday' — and it was.

Intellectual enthusiasm is rare in American colleges, and likely to be rarer still if social and athletic affairs continue to overshadow all other interests. Their dominance has given many a college faculty its characteristic attitude in matters of government. They assume that boys and girls will come to college for anything but studies. They tell new students just how many lectures in each course they may escape. A penalty of unsatisfactory work is the obligation to attend all the meetings on their schedule, and the usual reward for faithful conduct is the privilege of 'cutting' more lectures without a summons from the dean. Always the aim of students appears to be to escape as much as possible of the college life provided by the faculty, in order to indulge in more of the college life provided by themselves. Their inventive powers are marvelous; they bring forth an endless procession of devices for evading the opportunities for the sake of which (according to old-fashioned notions) students seek admission to college. The complacent acceptance of this condition by college faculties — the pervasive assumption that students have

no genuine intellectual enthusiasm — tends to stagnation. In the realm of thought some appear to have discovered the secret of petrified motion.

The pronounced tendencies in higher education aggravate the disease. Feeble palliatives are used from time to time, — the baseball schedule in one college, after six hours of debate by the faculty, was cut down from twenty-four games to twenty-two, — but the bold and necessary surgeon seldom gets in his good work. When he does operate, he is hung in effigy or elected President of the United States.

Concerning the policy of no intercollegiate games at Clark College, President Sanford says: 'Our experience with this plan has been absolutely satisfactory and no change of policy would be considered. Doubtless some of the less intellectually serious among the students might like to see intercollegiate sports introduced. It is generally understood that in a three-year college there is not time for such extras.' The faculty appear to be unanimously in favor of no intercollegiate games, since the course at Clark College takes only three years. Intercollegiate contests appear to be ruled out chiefly on the ground that, in a three-year course, students cannot afford to waste time. But why is it worse for a young man to waste parts of three years of his student life than to waste parts of four years of it?

The educational effect of our exaggerated emphasis on intercollegiate athletics is shown in the attitude of alumni. It is difficult to arouse the interest of a large proportion of graduates in anything else. At one of the best of our small colleges, in the Mississippi valley, I saw a massive concrete grandstand. This valiant emulation of the Harvard stadium seemed to me to typify the indifference of alumni to the crying needs of their alma mater. For

these graduates who contributed costly concrete seats, to be used by the student body in lieu of exercise, showed no concern over the fact that the college was worrying along with scientific laboratories inferior to those of the majority of modern high schools. 'What could I do?' the president asked. 'They would give the stadium, and they would not give the laboratories.'

#### IV

There have been numerous attempts to prove that intercollegiate athletics are not detrimental to scholarship by showing that athletes receive higher marks than other students. Such arguments are beside the point. Though we take no account of the weak-kneed indulgence to athletes in institutions where winning games is the dominant interest, and of the special coaching in their studies provided them because they are on the teams, we must take account of the fact that wherever the student body regards playing on intercollegiate teams as the supreme expression of loyalty, the men of greatest physical and mental strength are more likely than the others to go out for the teams, and these are the very men of whom we rightly expect greatest proficiency in scholarship. That they do not as a group show notable leadership in intellectual activities seems due to the excessive physical training which, at certain seasons, they substitute for study.

But this is not the main point. A large college might be willing to sacrifice the scholarship of a score of students, if that were all. The chief charge against intercollegiate athletics is their demoralizing effect on the scholarship of the entire institution. The weaklings who have not grit enough to stand up on the gridiron and be tackled talk interminably about the latest game and

the chances of winning the next one. They spend their hours in cheering the football hero, and their money in betting on him. The man of highest achievement in scholarship they either ignore or condemn with unpleasant epithets.

Further hindrances to scholarship are the periodic absences of the teams. It is said that athletes are required to make up the work they miss during their trips, but is not this one of the naïve ways wherein faculties deceive themselves? They are faced with this dilemma. Either the work of a given week in their courses is so substantial, and their own contribution to the work so great, that students cannot possibly miss it, and 'make it up' while meeting the equally great demands of the following week, or else the work of all the students is so easy that the athletes on a week's absence do not miss much. What actually happens, year in and year out, is that the standards of scholarship of the entire institution are lowered to meet the exigencies of intercollegiate athletics.

To what an illogical position we are driven by our fetish worship of college 'amateur athletics'! We especially provide the summer vacation as a period for play and recreation, and as a time when a majority of students must earn a part of the expenses of the college year. For these purposes we suspend all classes. Yet the student who uses this vacation to play ball and thereby earn some money must either lie about it or be condemned to outer darkness. There are no intercollegiate athletics for him; he has become a 'professional.' It matters not how fine his ideals of sport may be, how strong his character, or how high his scholarship. These considerations are ignored. The honors all go to the athlete who neglects his studies in order to make games his supreme interest during that part of the twelve

months which is specifically set apart for studies.

Far more sensible would be an arrangement whereby, if we must have intercollegiate athletics at all, the games could be scheduled in vacation periods, and a part of the gate-receipts, if we must have them at all, could be used for the necessary living expenses of worthy students instead of being squandered, as much of that money is squandered to-day. That this will seem a preposterous plan to those who are caught in the maelstrom of the present collegiate system need not surprise us. An accurate record of the history of intercollegiate athletics shows that, year in and year out, the arrangements desired by students are those that interfere most seriously with study during the days especially intended for study.

The maelstrom of college athletics! That would not seem too strong a term if we could view the age in which we live in right perspective, an age so unbalanced nervously that it demands perpetual excitement. We have fallen into a vicious circle: the excesses of excitement create a pathological nervous condition which craves greater excesses. The advertisement of a head-on collision of two locomotives is said to have drawn the largest crowd in the history of modern 'sport'; next in attractiveness is an intercollegiate football game. It is unfortunate that our universities, which should serve as balancing forces, — which should inculcate the ideal of sport as a counterpoise to an overwrought civilization, — are actually making conditions worse through cultivating, by means of athletics as a business, that passion for excitement which makes sustained thinking impossible and which is elsewhere kept at fever heat by prize-fights, bull-fights, and blood-curdling motion pictures.

v

But even if intercollegiate games are detrimental to the interests of scholarship, is not the college spirit they create worth all they cost? Perhaps so. A university is more than a curriculum and a campus. It is more than the most elaborate student annual can depict. Even in Carlyle's day, it was more than he called it: a true university was never a mere 'collection of books.' It is the spirit that giveth life, and 'college spirit' is certainly a name to conjure with. The first question is what we mean by college spirit. A student may throw his hat in the air, grab a megaphone, give 'three long rahs,' go through the gymnastics of a cheerleader, — putting the most ingenious mechanical toys to shame, — and yet leave some doubt whether he has adequately defined college spirit.

What is this college spirit that hovers over the paid coach and his grandstand — this 'indefinable something,' as one writer calls it, 'which is fanned into a bright flame by intercollegiate athletics'? Shall we judge the spirit by its manifestations in an institution famed above all else for its winning teams and its college spirit? In such an institution, not long ago, every student was cudgeled or cajoled into 'supporting the team,' and many a callow youth acted as though he thought he had reached the heights of self-sacrifice when he sat for hours on the grandstand, watching practice, puffing innumerable cigarettes, and laying up a stock of canned enthusiasm for the big game. A student who would not support his team by betting on it was regarded as deficient in spirit. Every intercollegiate game was the occasion of general neglect of college courses. If the game was at a neighboring city, the classrooms were half empty for two days; but the bar-rooms of that city were not empty,

and worse places regularly doubled their rates on the night of a big game. Some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the team went to jail for disturbing the peace. If the contest took place at home, returning alumni filled the fraternity houses and celebrated with general drunkenness. 'An indefinable something' — consisting of college property and that of private citizens — was 'fanned into a bright flame' in celebration of the victory. Following this came the spectacle of young men parading the streets in nightshirts. For residents of the town who did not enjoy this particular kind of spirit, the night was made hideous by the noises of revelry. All this and much more was tolerated for years on the assumption that students, imbued with college spirit, should not be subjected to the laws of decent living that govern those members of civilized communities who have not had the advantages of a higher education. The most serious difficulties between faculties and students and between students and the police, the country over, for the past twenty years, have arisen in connection with displays of 'college spirit' after the 'big game.' Any college and any community might cheerfully sacrifice this kind of college spirit.

But some men mean by college spirit something finer than lawlessness, dissipation, and rowdyism. They mean the loyalty to an institution which makes a student guard its good name by being manly and courteous in conduct at all times and in all places. They mean the sense of responsibility which aids a student in forming habits of temperance and industry. They mean that eagerness to make a grateful use of his opportunities which leads a student to keep his own body fit, through moderate athletics, and a physical training that knows no season — is never broken. By college spirit some men mean

this and far more: they mean that loyalty to a college which rivets a man to the severest tasks of scholarship, through which he gains intellectual power and enthusiasm, without which no graduate is an entire credit to any college; and finally they mean that vision of an ideal life beyond commencement which shows a man that only through the rigid subordination of transient and trivial pleasures can he hope to become the only great victory a university ever wins — a trained, devoted, and inspired alumnus, working for the welfare of mankind. There is no evidence that the intercollegiate athletics of to-day inculcate in many men this kind of college spirit.

Have I exaggerated the evils of intercollegiate athletics? Possibly I have. Exceptions should be cited here and there. But I am convinced that college faculties agree with me in my main contentions. My impression is that at least three fourths of the teachers I have met the country over believe that the American college would better serve its highest purposes, if intercollegiate athletics were no more. At a recent dinner of ten deans and presidents, they declared, one by one, in confidence that they would abolish intercollegiate athletics if they could withstand the pressure of students and alumni.

Is it therefore necessary for all institutions to give up intercollegiate athletics permanently? Probably not. Let our colleges first take whatever measures are necessary to make athletics yield their educational values to all students and teachers. If intercollegiate athletics can then be conducted as incidental and contributory to the main purposes of athletics, well and good. But first of all the question must be decisively settled, which aims are to dominate — those of business or those of education. And it will be difficult for a college already in the clutches

of commercialism to retain the system and at the same time cultivate a spirit antagonistic to it. Probably the quicker and surer way would be to suspend all intercollegiate athletics for a college generation by agreement of groups of colleges, — during which period every effort should be made to establish the tradition of athletics for education. If an institution could not survive such a period of transition, it is a fair question whether the institution has any reason for survival.

Typically American though our frantic devotion to intercollegiate athletics may be, we shall not long tolerate a system which provides only a costly, injurious, and excessive régime of physical training for a few students, especially those who need it least. The call today is for inexpensive, healthful, and moderate exercise for all students, especially those who need it most. Colleges must sooner or later heed that call: their athletics must be for education, not for business.